ECE Highlights

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE No. 21 April 1994

WOMEN IN A CHANGING WORLD
CALL FOR ACTION FROM A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Organizes Regional High-level Meeting in Preparation of the Fourth World Conference on Women

Vienna International Centre, 17-21 October 1994

(Photo by J. Maillard for ILO)

Enhancing the role of women in economic and public decision-making is among the major topics to be discussed at the Vienna Preparatory Meeting.

In preparation of the Fourth World Conference on Women, which will be held in Beijing, China in 1995, the five United Nations regional commissions will organize, during 1994, High-level Meetings dealing with major regional aspects of the theme of the World Conference on Equality, Development and Peace.

At its 48th session in April 1993 the Commission adopted decision K(48) on the ECE contribution to the preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference on Women and decided to hold the ECE regional preparatory meeting at the Vienna International Centre from 17 to 21 October 1994. Delegations are expected, to focus on the impact of economic and social changes in Europe on the role of women in the region.

Agenda

The draft agenda emphasizes the role of women in the economy, in particular in countries in transition. Five substantive items will be discussed at the preparatory meeting: women's role in the economy; demographic and statistical trends; employment and entrepreneurship; women in the transition process; and women in public life and governance. The review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advance of Women and the regional inputs into the Platform for Action and Regional Plan of Action also figure on the agenda.

A regional Platform for Action

The Beijing Conference on Women is expected to adopt a Platform for Action to serve as a guide to Governments for the improvement of the situation for women worldwide. The Vienna high-level meeting is invited to review the regional inputs to this Platform, a preliminary outline of which has been prepared by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The delegations will also consider a proposed Regional Plan of Action on Women and the Economy which will constitute a recommendation for action for Governments of ECE member countries.

ECE Task Force

An internal ECE Task Force, chaired by the Deputy Executive Secretary, launched the substantive preparations for the meeting, and provides guidance for the accreditation of NGOs. A process of consultation and cooperation has been initiated by the ECE secretariat with national committees, other UN agencies, European institutions and NGOs competent in issues related to women.

Preparations at the national level

The Commission on the Status of Women urges Governments to initiate preparations for their national reports as soon as possible and to ensure that they are submitted to the regional conferences in time to serve as contributions to the regional review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. These national reports will constitute an opportunity to take stock of the present situation of women, analyze the progress made since the Nairobi Conference and prepare for future action.

NGO relations

The ECE has established regular contacts with the ECE/NGO Working Group in order to ensure the participation of NGOs in the meeting. In compliance with the guidelines provided by the Secretary-General of the Conference, the Commission is responsible for the accreditation of NGOs without consultative status at the regional meeting. ECE will screen NGOs requesting such accreditation by applying the established guidelines.

Funding

The preparatory work undertaken by the ECE for the Vienna meeting will have to be financed by extra-budgetary funds. To date, 13 countries have announced contributions and more pledges are expected to be made in the near future. A Trust Fund has been established for governments and other donors to contribute to the budget.

NEWS IN BRIEF

KAZAKHSTAN 54th ECE MEMBER COUNTRY

The Republic of Kazakhstan has become a member State of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), bringing the number of ECE members to 54. Kazakhstan thus joins other former Soviet Republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus Region, which became members in summer 1993 when the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) amended the terms of reference of ECE.

Chernobyl Accident's Disastrous Consequences to Forestry Foreseen for a Long Time to Come

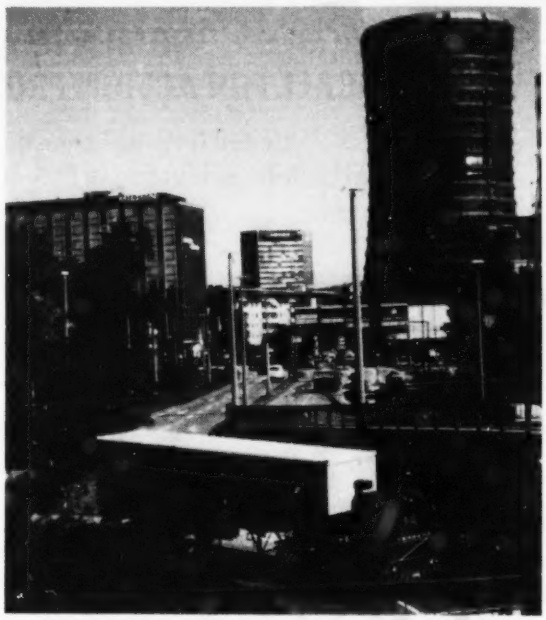
The Chernobyl nuclear plant accident of 26 April 1986 released a considerable quantity of radioactive substances, comprising iodine, caesium, barium, strontium and plutonium into the environment. By 1991, over 13.1 million ha of territories contaminated with radionuclides were revealed, of which: 4.7 million ha are in Russia, 4.6 million in Belarus and 3.7 million in the Ukraine. The radioactive contamination of forests has severely harmed the forest sector in these three countries, resulting in reductions in all types of economic and recreational use of forests. A team of specialists working on behalf of the Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training, jointly organized by the ECE, the FAO and the ILO, met at Mogilev, Belarus, in November 1993 to discuss the results of the research and practical work in Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus on the influence of the Chernobyl accident on the forest ecosystems. The problem is not diminishing with time; forest areas, and the people involved with forestry, will still be at risk for decades. Experience gained in solving Chernobyl disaster problems and in clearing up the problems that remain could serve as a solid basis for research and scientific work in many countries. International assistance in this effort is of particular importance.

Gerald Hinteregger Receives Honorary Doctorate

The Scientific Board of the University of Economics in Bratislava has awarded Mr. Gerald Hinteregger the rank of "doctor honoris cause" in recognition of his merits as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (1987-1993), for services rendered to the Slovak Republic and to the University of Economics of Bratislava. The ceremonial session took place in Bratislava on 30 March 1994.

ECE Committee Discusses European Transport Issues

The ECE Inland Transport Committee held its fifty-sixth session from 17 to 21 January 1994 to discuss various problems of road, rail and inland waterway transport as well as the status of several conventions and agreements on transport which were elaborated and are constantly reviewed by the Committee. The development of transport infrastructure was considered to be of fundamental significance for the economic development and integration of countries in the ECE region. A new draft Convention on Customs Treatment of Pool Containers and International Transport was recommended for signature by ECE member countries. The new Container Pool Convention is designed to be applicable worldwide and for all modes of transport. It will complement the traditional requirements for temporary admission of individual containers by a new concept called "equivalent compensation", which foresees that another container of the same type can be re-exported in the place of a previously imported container. Customs authorities will also benefit from the new Convention as they can save a substantial amount of time and money in guaranteeing Customs control.



The inland transport of containers by road in Europe

AWARDS FOR KLAUS BRENDOW AND NORMAN SCOTT

Two senior ECE staff members who recently retired after decades of service have been honoured by their countries of origin: Klaus Brendow, former Director of the Energy Division, was awarded the German Federal Cross of Merit (Bundesverdienstkreuz) and Norman Scott, former Director of the Trade Division, the British Order of St. Michael and St. George (CMG). Congratulations.

KEEPING INFORMED WITH ECE PUBLICATIONS

ECE Economic Survey of Europe analyses development of transition countries and western market economies

Recent economic developments in Europe and North America are reviewed in the latest issue of this annual ECE publication. The principal focus of the *Survey* is on developments in the economies in transition of central and eastern Europe and the countries that constituted the former Soviet Union.

According to the *Survey*, 1993 witnessed the first economic upturns in countries in transition. However, for

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eastern Europe as a whole, 1993 was another year of decreasing economic activity. In Russia and the other member countries of the CIS, the collapse in output continued virtually unchecked, with an average fall of some 13 per cent following a 20 per cent drop in 1992. Unemployment is now a major problem: on average, about 14 per cent of the labour force in eastern Europe and between approximately 5 and 10 per cent in Russia. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has been much less than expected and is concentrated in Hungary and the Czech Republic. Considerable progress has been achieved with privatization not only in the "advanced group" of reformers but also in Russia. But the pace has slowed down in the face of difficulties encountered in restructuring state-owned enterprises. The Survey expects output to grow in eastern Europe in 1994, although not in all countries. It sees little chance of the decline in Russia and in most of the other CIS countries coming to an end. Modest growth in western Europe, in addition to the successful conclusion of the GATT Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, represent improvements in the external economic environment for these countries.

For the past year, western Europe has been in one of the severest recessions of the post-war period. Nevertheless, for the west European countries combined, real GDP fell, only slightly, by 0.1 per cent. In North America, the recovery gained strength in the second half of 1993, led by strong consumer and investment demand. For the industrialized countries combined, real GDP rose by only about 1 per cent in 1993, declining output in western Europe and Japan being more than offset by the favourable economic developments in North America. The sharp cyclical downswing has led to a considerable deterioration in the labour market in western Europe, where total employment fell by about 1.5 per cent in 1993. The loss of jobs was concentrated in industry. In the United States, employment growth picked up in 1993 and the unemployment rate fell to 6.7 per cent.

A closing chapter of the *Survey* reviews the experience of restructuring large state-owned enterprises in four economies in transition – the Czech Republic, eastern Germany, Hungary and Poland.

Economic Survey for Europe in 1993-1994, Sales No. E.94.II.E.1. Price: US$ 60.00.

Operational Foreign Investment Enterprises Make a Noticeable Contribution to the Polish Economy

During 1992, the total number of foreign investment enterprises (FIEs) in the former Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) area almost doubled to reach 62.1 thousand as compared with 31.8 thousand in January 1992. During the first three quarters of 1993, their number is estimated to have grown by over 18 thousand, to 80.1 thousand, on 1 October 1993.

A statistical monograph on foreign investment in Poland is contained in *East-West Investment News, No. 4*, Winter 1993. The ECE Newsletter further reports on two recent conferences relevant to foreign investors (held in Belarus and Slovenia) and highlights recent publications covering foreign investment and trade regulations in Russia and Bulgaria. It also provides the addresses of foreign investment agencies set up in east European economies in transition.

East-West Investment News, No. 4. Winter 1993. Annual subscription (4 issues) US$ 80.00. Single copy: US$ 20.00.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

GENERAL

Introducing UN/ECE (leaflet), December 1993.

Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE/778/Rev.3).

Catalogue of publications, July 1993.

International Migration in North America, Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa: Research and Research-Related Activities. Rapid Information System, Bulletin No. 1, November 1992. Published semi-annually, in May and November, by the Population Activities Unit of the Division for Economic Analysis and Projections of the ECE, as part of the project "International Migration in the ECE Region".

Economic Bulletin for Europe, Vol. 45. Sales No. E.94.II.2. Price: US$ 55.00.

AGRICULTURE AND TIMBER

Profitability, Productivity and Prices in the Forest Industries in the ECE Region 1974-1990 (ECE/TIM/72), November 1993.

Prices of Agricultural Products and Selected Inputs in Europe and North America 1991/1992, Annual ECE/FAO Price Review No. 42 (ECE/AGRI/24), Sales No. E.93.II.E.22. Price: US$ 26.00.

Timber Bulletin, Vol. XLVI, No. 3, *Annual Forest Products Market Review, 1992-1993*, ISSN 0259-4323.

Forest Fire Statistics 1990-1992 (ECE/TIM/70).

ENERGY

Solar Power Systems, ECE Energy Series No. 11, Sales No. GV.E.93.0.18. Price: US$ 60.00.

ENVIRONMENT

The State of Transboundary Air Pollution, 1992 Update, Sales No. E.93.II.E.25. Price: US$ 25.00.

Protection of Water Resources and Aquatic Ecosystems, Sales No. E.93.II.E.23. Price: US$ 24.00.

World Engineering Industries and Automation: Performance and Prospects 1992-1994. Sales No. E.94.II.5. Price: US$ 75.00.

INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

Impact of Developments in Scrap Reclamation and Preparation on the World Steel Industry, ECE Steel Series 1993 (ECE/STEEL/84), Sales No. E.93.II.28. Price: US$ 50.00.

STATISTICS

Statistical Journal of the ECE, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1993. ISSN 0167-8000.

Programme of Current Housing and Building Statistics for Countries in the ECE Region, Statistical Standards and Studies, No. 43, Sales No. E.94.II.E.3. Price: US$ 20.00.

Annual Bulletin of General Energy Statistics for Europe 1993, Vol. XXIV, Sales No. E/F/R.93.II.E.13. Price: US$ 40.00.

Statistics of World Trade in Steel 1992, Sales No. E/F/R.93.II.E.34. Price: US$ 28.00.

TRADE

Legal Aspects of Privatization in Industry, Sales No. E.92.II.E.2. Price: US$ 50.00.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Seminar on Comprehensive Policies for Renewal and Modernization of Human Settlements (Vienna, Austria, preceded by technical visits 10-12 June)

Today the issue of renewal of human settlements in the ECE region has taken on new significance. Increased migratory movements, difficult economic conditions, socio-demographic developments and the introduction of market conditions in the countries of central and eastern Europe have put the renewal and modernization of housing stock at the top of their priorities. The challenge is to adapt policies and implement strategies which will guide urban and rural development towards improved efficiency, sustainability and a better quality of life.

A seminar will be held in Vienna, Austria, from 13-17 June 1994 to review the progress made in the planning and implementation of renewal and modernization policies and in the implementation of strategies integrating social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects. The evaluation of strategies used in countries in transition will be of special concern. Participants are expected to recommend action to help reduce the degradation of the built environment, improve the well-being of the population and promote a rational use of land, materials and labour resources.

WORKSHOPS ON ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION 1994

	April
13-15	Land registration and cadastre (Budapest, Hungary)
18-22	Consultations on ECP (Vienna, Austria)
25-26	Global review of the European robots and steel industry to assist economies in transition (Warsaw, Poland)
25-29	Introduction of new agricultural statistics in newly independent states (Minsk, Belarus)
25-29	Development of agricultural statistics in CIS and other countries in transition (Nitra, Slovakia)
	May
3-6	Renewable Sources of Energy
30-3 June	Quality assurance for meat and meat products (Budapest, Hungary)
	June
14-17	Market adaptation of coal industry structures in central and eastern Europe (Moscow, Russian Federation)
14-21	Systems for ecologically safe agricultural production (Central Russia, Russian Federation)

ECE CALENDAR

1994

Meetings listed are held in Geneva unless otherwise indicated.

	April
11-15	Working Party on Road Traffic Safety
18-22	Symposium on Energy Efficiency Management and its Widespread Dissemination in Central and Eastern Europe (Kiev, Ukraine)
18-26	FORTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
	May
2 - 4	Working Party on Housing Development, Modernization and Management
3 - 5	Working Party on Electric Power
16-18	Meeting of Experts on Coal Trade, Statistics and Transport (Paris, France)
16-19	COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
16-20	Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
16-20	Seminar on Integrated Statistical Information Systems and Related Matters (ISIS '94) (Bratislava, Slovakia)
23-29	Study tour of iron and steel industry in Japan
	June
30-1 June	SENIOR ADVISERS TO ECE GOVERNMENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL AND WATER PROBLEMS
1 - 3	Working Group of Senior Government Officials "Environment for Europe"
1 - 4	Work Session on Demographic Projections (Luxembourg)
13-14	Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, Special Session (Oslo, Norway)
13-17	CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS (OECD, Paris, France)
13-17	Seminar on Comprehensive Policies for Renewal and Modernization of Human Settlements (Vienna, Austria, preceded by technical visits 10-12 June)
27-1 July	Seminar on Clothing and Safety Equipment in Forestry (Kuopio, Finland)
28-1 July	Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

WHERE TO ORDER

The publications listed with sales prices may be ordered from: **United Nations Bookshop, Sales Unit, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland** and a number of bookstores in the ECE region. Send cheque or money order in US dollars made payable to: UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS.

Those publications listed without a sales price may be obtained from the Information Officer, Economic Commission for Europe, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

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